

**MINUTES
STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD
OCTOBER 4, 2003**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Neil Bernstein, Chair
Robin Fortney
Kathy Gourley
Scott Moats
Laura Jackson

STAFF PRESENT

John Pearson
Liz Christiansen

ADVISORS PRESENT

Paul Christiansen

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Neil Bernstein called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM on October 4, 2003 at the Cherokee County Conservation Board Office.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Add: 10a Discussion of management issues at Hanging Bog .

Motion was made by Robin Fortney to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Kathy Gourley. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion was made by Kathy Gourley to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Scott Moats. Motion carried unanimously.

STEELE PRAIRIE

Neil Bernstein said that in 1993, John Pearson and Daryl Howell met with the County Engineer about the concerns of the road being water logged. John and Daryl met again with the County Engineer in May of this year and talked with him about various ideas, solutions and concerns. The County Engineer did not come to the tour yesterday to meet with the Board. Bill Watson and Howard Paul joined the Board for the tour. No conclusions were reached after visiting the site. The issues that need to be discussed include the roadway – how much sedimentation is coming into the low-lying areas from the surrounding farm areas and the roadside itself. The other issue dealt with the brome in the high-lying areas and reed canary grass in the low-lying areas.

Bob McKay suggested that a soil scientist could go in and make an evaluation on how much sediment that supports reed canary grass may be in the drainages.

Laura Jackson suggested that someone should visit the site after a storm event.

Neil Bernstein mentioned that Carl Kurtz has had good success in knocking back reed canary grass by having a fall burn and then treating the re-sprouts with Round-up right away. We are thinking about trying that on about 25% of the area this fall and spring.

John Pearson said that they discussed the possibility of a fall burn followed by an herbicide treatment to treat the canary grass and then a late spring burn to control the brome.

Scott Moats suggested that it would be a great idea to review the process of the management plans and what they entail so that land managers are following through with the original agreement for managing the land. It would be good to arrange a check-in for the different preserves just to make sure that everything is being kept up.

Neil Bernstein suggested that as a board we could delegate certain preserves among us to be visited once in a one or two year span. This could be an agenda item for the next month's meeting.

Liz Christiansen suggested that in order for the Preserve Board to promote our needs for funding to the legislature we will need to A) document the need – review and take pictures of the issues at the preserve, B) send a letter of request for preserve appropriation.

Neil Bernstein summarized the points discussed:

- Bob McKay is going to talk with Deb Quade of Iowa Geological Survey.
- John Pearson is going talk with area managers about the possibility of a fall burn and what areas should be burned.
- At the next meeting we will delegate preserves to board members to look at the review process.
- Document needs of preserves and have Paul Christiansen approach the NRC about possibly developing a bird, prairie, preserve, etc. stamp to help with funding.

Motion was made by Kathy Gourley to approve the process of approaching the NRC to develop a stamp. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESERVE NOMINATION UPDATES

Banister-McGregor Woods – The floristic study funded by the Preserves Board is in progress; a report is expected in December. District court decided that the County Engineer can access the McGregor property to conduct studies after a 30-day notice. Daryl Howell has done a bird count. Daryl and Neil Bernstein have done some fish surveys. A mammal survey is not necessary for this site. A management plan is still needed.

Hartman Bluff – Dedication papers are being prepared, the papers have not yet been signed by the Governor. A ceremony is planned for October 5th in which Laura Jackson is a featured speaker.

Glenwood Resource Center – The first meeting of the team to develop a management plan is October 30.

Coralville sites – Neil Bernstein visited prospective preserve sites around Coralville Reservoir with Tom Madsen. Tours of these sites plus the nearby Lake McBride State Park and Sand Woods nominations may be included in the 2004 schedule. Tom Madsen has found quite a few rare plants in the woodland areas. The Corp of Engineers are willing to consider preserve nomination. An area on the Hawkeye Wildlife Area contains sandy prairie and ornate box turtles. The area is hardly used; the only impact would be high waters from the reservoir. A two day tour to visit these two locations should be considered at the next meeting.

DeLong Savanna – Five Board members toured site on September 13. Neil Bernstein said that Karl DeLong is expecting a decision from the Board on whether his site could be preserve status. This discussion should be on the agenda for the next meeting. Things that need to be considered regarding this site include: 1) If a reconstructed savanna could still be a preserve 2) Management issues 3) Natural integrity of the area.

Baylor Prairie – Report on amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals by EcoCentrics has been completed. Susan Hickey is working on the management plan. John Pearson said that he will check up on its status.

Slayton Round Barn – Board toured site at July meeting, Management plan needs to be written.

There was discussion about the geological sites at Fort Dodge and how the board should go about getting this as a preserve. Neil Bernstein asked Bob McKay to research the ownership of the land.

Karl DeLong Proposal – Pros and cons were listed regarding this site.

<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
Gorgeous place	More management required then we would be able to provide.
Large	Who will keep up the land after the owner passes? And will they keep it as a savanna?
Intensely managed	
Unique	
Well documented	

John Pearson relayed his concerns from botanists that if seeds are planted it makes it hard to keep records on what is natural and what has been introduced. On the other hand, this is part of the restoration process.

Neil Bernstein said that we should suggest exploring this conservation easement to the Heritage Foundation first, to see if that is more likely. We need to come up with a decision today or at the next meeting so Karl has a clear signal. We need to contact Karl DeLong and ask him what his plan for management will be and the direction to go.

PROPOSAL BY LINN COUNTY FOR MEDIATION OF HIGHWAY 100 ISSUE

Ellen Habel, Grants and Communications Manager for Linn County, has proposed that stakeholders, including the State Preserves Advisory Board, participate in a mediation process to resolve the issues pertaining to the proposed extension of Highway 100 in Cedar Rapids.

Robin Fortney agreed that this is a great opportunity and very important for the Preserves Board to participate in the mediation.

Motion was made by Neil Bernstein to participate in the mediation effort with assumption that it is a non-binding decision. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.

Liz Christiansen mentioned that she will get in contact with Ellen to confirm with her.

Neil Bernstein will write the letter to Ellen on behalf of the board pending Liz's information.

SCENIC PRESERVE CRITERIA STUDY

The committee convened by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation met on August 18 and September 22.

Robin Fortney said that the purpose of the two meetings was to articulate criteria that would be considered for the identification of scenic areas.

Laura Jackson said that public involvement would be good in determining what is considered to be the “jewel” areas.

Informational Only

STARR’S CAVE STATE PRESERVE

Construction of a footbridge across Flint Creek to the cave is proposed by the Des Moines County Conservation Board. The present approaches to the cave are by wading through the stream or by scrambling down a steep slope. The DNR owns the land and the County Conservation Board manages it. The County Conservation Board applied for the funding.

John Pearson said they would like to begin construction of this project early next year. They are waiting for permission to proceed.

Bob McKay said that there would not be any harm done geologically.

Scott Moats said that this is an educational place. Access should be easily available for those wanting to visit the cave. The footbridge would also take care of the safety concerns.

John Pearson said that an archeological study done by a professional firm around the bridge area. There were no significant findings.

Motion was made by Laura Jackson to approve the footbridge at Starr’s Cave State Preserve. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried.

Kathy Gourley opposed.

FRIENDS OF THE PRESERVES

Neil Bernstein said that there are several people interested in funding Friends’ groups. We need to decide what would be the duties and responsibilities of a friend of the preserves.

Scott Moats suggested that they could maybe check up on the preserve sites to make sure that proper management is being done.

Various funding issues and concerns were discussed amongst Board members.

Neil Bernstein suggested that we discuss the funding issues at the next meeting.

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST ARTICLES FOR PRESERVES

Neil Bernstein expressed his thanks to see the prairie preserve articles published. We need to keep this going.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Item 10A – Hanging Bog

Neil Bernstein said that there has been some tornado damage in the Cedar Rapids area. Several large trees have been uprooted and some trails have been blocked. The Board will probably be approached for a management decision in how we are to deal with the clean up.

Scott Moats said that he will call Neil to take more pictures of the damage and to get any ideas or additional resources that maybe helpful.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2004

January 8th - 9th – Des Moines

April 1st - 2nd – Cedar County

July 1st – 2nd – Johnson County

October 7th – 8th – SE Iowa

BOARD TOUR

The Board toured Steele Prairie on Friday, October 3, 2003 at 1:00 PM to examine problems associated with the roadside ditch on the north side of the preserve. The tour was open to the public.

ADJOURNMENT

<i>Motion was made by Scott Moats to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.</i>

With no further business to come before the State Preserves Advisory Board, Chairperson Neil Bernstein adjourned the meeting at 12:35 PM on October 4, 2003.

The next State Preserves Advisory Board meeting will be held on January 9th in the Wallace State Office Building in Des Moines.

A

Adjournment, 6
approve agenda, 1
approve minutes, 1

B

Board Members Present, 1
Board Tour, 6

C

call to order, 1

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100 issue, 4

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